

CIACO NID 81 [REDACTED]

July 28, 1981

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SPECIAL ANALYSIS

USSR-POLAND: Moscow's Next Moves

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*The Soviets have grave misgivings about the results of the Polish party congress, and probably doubt that the party as now constituted will be able to limit and eventually reverse the course of reform. For at least several weeks, however, they will be assessing the new party leaders and seeking to build influence among them. Barring major strikes or public disorders, the USSR is likely to eschew major military moves in favor of continued political pressure.* [REDACTED]

Moscow will have even fewer assets in Poland to influence events there as a result of the congress. While expecting extensive personnel changes, the Soviets probably did not anticipate the near-total turnover that took place in the Central Committee and Politburo. [REDACTED]

The departure of several of the Politburo's more conservative members must have come as a rude shock in view of party leader Kania's earlier efforts to secure their election as delegates. The preponderance of new faces on the Politburo, including two intellectuals and a Solidarity member, has to be disquieting. [REDACTED]

The inability of Kania to dominate and the diffusion of authority away from the central leadership belied Kania's assurances that he would remain in control. In a conversation on the eve of the congress, a Soviet Central Committee official said that the most critical problem in Poland was the lack of effective leadership. [REDACTED]

Moscow also is alarmed by the precedent of free elections within the party. The Kremlin gerontocracy almost certainly is disturbed by the prohibition against more than two terms in office for senior party leaders and the ban on most of them holding government positions. [REDACTED]

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Approved for Release  
Date AUG 1999 1999

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The congress, however, did not meet Moscow's worst fears. At least one leading conservative, Olszowski, retained his seat on the Politburo, while Solidarity's leading patron within the party leadership, Fiszbach, and other liberals lost their positions. The Soviets also may hope that the more unified party may be better able to tackle Poland's economic and social problems. [REDACTED]

The Message to the Poles

The absence of strong negative media comment since the congress suggests Moscow does not want to preclude a working relationship with the newly elected officials. Nevertheless, the absence so far of the *Pravda* editorial that normally follows an East European congress suggests that the Politburo may not yet have reached a consensus on how to treat Poland. [REDACTED]

An admonitory tone has pervaded what Soviet officials have previously said. For example, President Brezhnev's curt message to Kania on his reelection indicated continued lack of confidence in the first secretary. [REDACTED]

A subsequent joint message from Brezhnev and Premier Tikhonov, though more cordial, lectured the Poles on the need to follow the principles of Marxism-Leninism and rebuff "anarchy and counterrevolution." The Soviets seem to be saying that the price for their acceptance of the party reforms must be tougher and more decisive actions. [REDACTED]

Outlook

For at least the next several weeks, Moscow will assess the new leaders' effectiveness and responsiveness to Soviet concerns and attempt to build influence among them. Brezhnev presumably will stress Soviet misgivings during the traditional summer meeting with the Polish party leader in the Crimea. Moscow will encourage Polish conservatives to push their views inside the party and to remain available as potential new leaders. [REDACTED]

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Over the short term, the USSR is unlikely to exert military pressure unless widespread strikes or popular unrest develops. Moscow recognizes that such a step might antagonize the new Polish leaders, inflame Polish nationalism, and complicate other Soviet foreign policy interests. [REDACTED]

Over the longer term, Kremlin concern is likely to focus on the Polish leaders' ability to keep Poland in the Soviet security orbit. Recent comments by Soviet officials suggest that this factor is even more fundamental to Soviet calculations than the emergence of political pluralism and sociopolitical reformism, which can be tolerated so long as Poland's adherence to the Warsaw Pact is not undermined. [REDACTED]

The officials also indicated, however, that Soviet leaders have been unable as yet to define criteria to determine when that point would be reached. It is on those criteria that future consideration of military intervention will hinge. [REDACTED]